



2 of 9

frank MILLER

HELL and BACK

A **SIN CITY** love story



DON'T
WORRY. I'M
A QUALIFIED
PHYSICIAN.

frank **MILLER** *story & art*
lynn **VARLEY** *cover colors*

diana **SCHUTZ** *editor*
cary **GRAZZINI** *designer*
mike **RICHARDSON** *publisher*



ON YOUR
FEET,
LONGHAIR!





WELL, HELL,
MANSON. TIME
WAS...

I AIN'T BEEN
A WOMAN
FOR NINE
YEARS.

SNAP
CHINK

THE WORLD'S
SEEN NASTIER
COPS THAN THE
ONES YOU'LL
MEET IN BASIN
CITY.

LIKE THOSE
GUYS WHO
WORKED FOR
STALIN.

ESTHER.

ESTHER.

ESTHER. WHAT
HAPPENED?



AARR

CANDYASS
LONGHAIR JUNKIE
FAGGOT. GIVE ME
SOME TROUBLE.
RESIST ARREST.

COME ON. I'M
DARING YOU. I'M
BEGGING YOU.



SORRY ABOUT
MY PARTNER,
STRANGER. HE'S
NOT HIMSELF.

IT'S HIS MARRIAGE.
HE'S GOING THROUGH A
VERY ROUGH PATCH.
WE'RE ALL QUITE WOR-
RIED ABOUT HIM.

SHUT
YOUR TRAP,
BUNDY.

STAY
CALM.

REMEMBER

PUNT

LIKE
THAT,
JUNKIE-
BOY?

GYAA

STAY
CALM.

STAY
CALM.

STAY
CALM.

SHINK

WAIT.

REMEMBER

A SOFT
VOICE,
SMOOTH AS
SYRUP=

DON'T
FIGHT ME.
DON'T FIGHT
ME. I WON'T
HURT
YOU.



A SECOND
VOICE--THIS
ONE SHRIIL,
JITTERY,
JAGGED
AS SHAT-
TERING
GLASS:

DON'T
DAMAGE
HER. DAMN
IT. DON'T
DAMAGE
HER.

REGAIN
YOUR COM-
POSURE,
DOCTOR
FREDRIC--
AND QUIT
YOUR
WHINING.

I WON'T
LEAVE A
BRUISE. I
NEVER
DO.

ESTHER.

SHE
STRUGGLED.

SHE
KICKED.

ESTHER.

ESTHER.
I COULDN'T
STAND UP.

I COULDN'T
MOVE MY
ARMS.

I COULDN'T
MOVE A
MUSCLE.

I WAS
RIGHT
THERE
AND I
COULDN'T
DO ANY-
THING.

ESTHER. I
COULDN'T
MOVE A
MUSCLE.

I COULDN'T
LIFT MY ARMS.

WHY
COULDN'T
I MOVE?

TOK

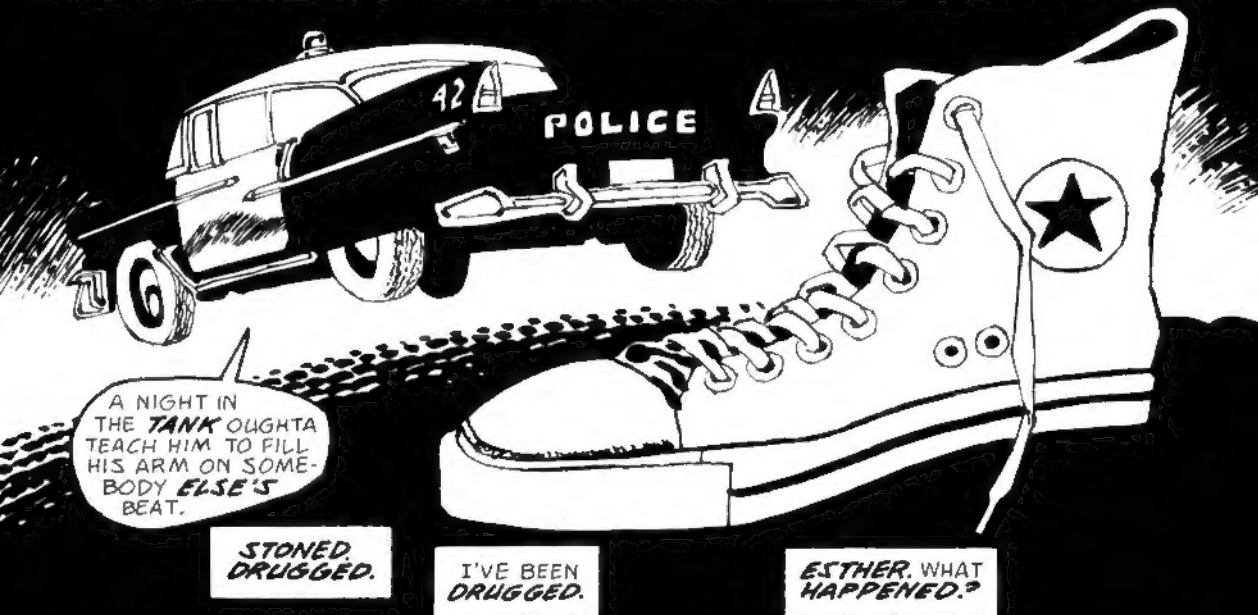


NOT TO SOUND LIKE A **LIB-ERAL** OR ANYTHING, MANSON, BUT YOU COULD'VE **ASKED** THE MAN HOW HE WOUND **UP** BACK THERE.

HE JUST **MIGHT** HAVE BEEN **MUGGED**.

MUGGED, MY **BUTT**. LOOK AT HIS **EYES**. PUPILS **DILATED** WIDE AS **SAUCERS**.

HE'S **STONED** OUT OF HIS **MIND**.



A NIGHT IN THE **TANK** OUGHTA TEACH HIM TO FILL HIS ARM ON SOMEBODY **ELSE'S** BEAT.

STONED
DRUGGED.

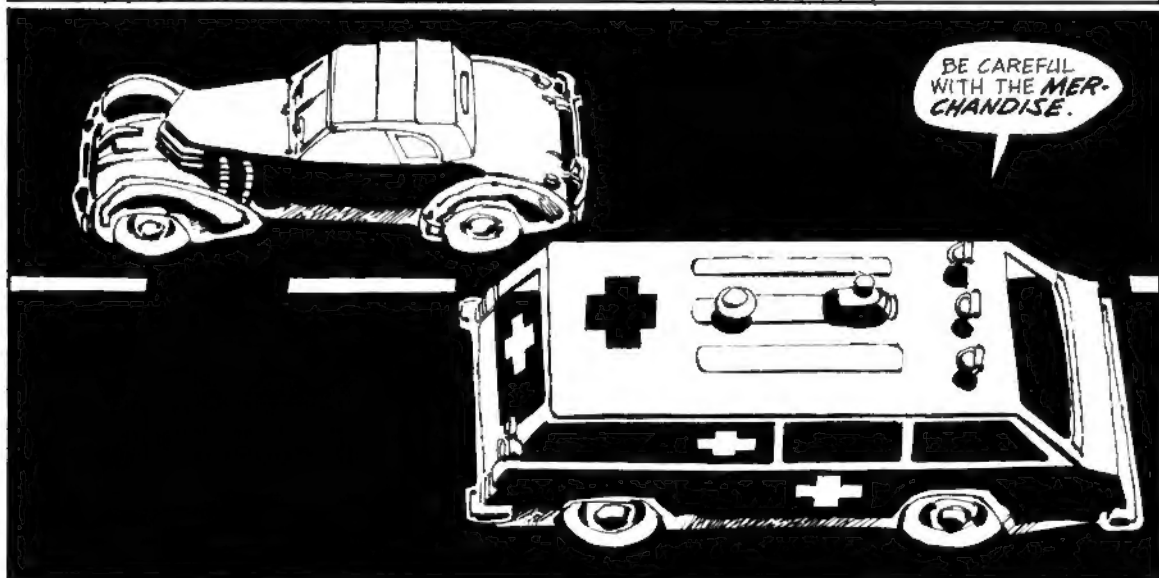
I'VE BEEN
DRUGGED.

ESTHER. WHAT
HAPPENED.?



DON'T **FRET**. YOU'RE **SAFE** WITH **US**. YOU'RE **PRECIOUS** TO **US**.

AND YOU'RE IN **GOOD** **HANDS**. **GOOD** **HANDS**.





NOT WHEN THEY CAN
SPARE THEMSELVES
THE **PAPERWORK**
BY SIMPLY TOSSING
ME IN THE **TANK**.



I DON'T **REMEMBER**
TELLING YOU TO STOP
WALKING, PECKER-
WOOD

I'M JUST
TRYING TO BE
ACCOMMO-
DATING,
OFFICER



I THOUGHT YOU'D
WANT THESE
BACK.

CHINK
CHING



HUKK
HUKK





HUKK
HUKK

BLAGG

HUKK

BEEFLES. IN
MY HEAD. IN MY
BRAIN. INSIDE MY
BRAIN. EATING
MY BRAIN. I
CAN HEAR
THEM

THE
TANK.

IGNORE THE
SOUNDS.
IGNORE THE
SMELLS.

CLEAR
YOUR
MIND.

ESCAPE.

ESCAPE--TO
YOUR MOST
PRIVATE
PLACE--IN
YOUR MIND.



YOUR PRIVATE
PLACE IT'S
ALWAYS THERE,
WAITING FOR
YOU.

IN YOUR
MIND.

IT'S WHERE YOU
WENT WHEN YOU
WERE A KID AND
THINGS GOT BAD.

IT SAVED YOUR
LIFE WHEN THE
MISSION WENT
ALL WRONG

IT'S ALWAYS
THERE FOR
YOU

GO. IT'S EASY.
YOU CAN ALWAYS
DO IT

IT'S
EASY.

SEPTEMBER
BREEZE.

GENTLE NEW
ENGLAND SUN.

DRY LEAVES
DANCING,
CRACKLING
LIKE FIRE.

HEAVENLY
CALM

YOU'RE
CLEAR

NOW
REMEMBER.

REMEMBER
EVERYTHING.





WE'D MET A
FEW HOURS
EARLIER

OUR CONVERSATION
TRAILED OFF

THERE DIDN'T
SEEM TO BE
ANYTHING
WORTH
SAYING



SHE CIRCLED,
LIKE A BOXER
SIZING UP AN
OPPONENT

SHE FROZE, WARY,
A BUTTERFLY
PERCHED ON A
LEAF -

--READY TO
FLY AWAY

HER HANDS
TREMBLED







A SOUND THAT
BROUGHT BACK
MEMORIES

THE
WRONG
KIND

FLIPP

WING

SOMETHING
STABBED
MY NECK

NOT A
BULLET

WALLACE?

MY BODY
DIED

MY HEAD WAS A
BOWLING BALL
LOLLING AROUND
ON A USELESS
PILE OF MEAT.

USELESS. I
WAS USELESS.

BUT I COULD
HEAR.

I COULD
SEE.



DON'T
FIGHT ME
DON'T FIGHT
ME I WON'T
HURT YOU

SHE
STRUGGLED.

SHE
KICKED.

DON'T
DAMAGE
HER DAMN
IT DON'T
DAMAGE
HER

I WAS
USELESS.

I COULDN'T
MOVE A
MUSCLE.

BUT I HAD
TO MOVE

I COULDN'T
LEFT MY ARMS.

BUT I
HAD TO

I HAD
TO



DAMN
IT WHAT'S
THAT GUY
MADE OUT OF?
HE'S GETTING
UP!

NO

HE
ISN'T

F4PP

GHA



THAT'S IT
THAT'S ALL
I'VE GOT

NOTHING TO DO
NOW BUT RELAX
AND WAIT FOR
THE **TRANQUIL-
IZER** THEY SHOT
ME WITH TO
WORK ITS WAY
OUT OF MY
SYSTEM

WAIT TILL
MORNING
AND
FREEDOM



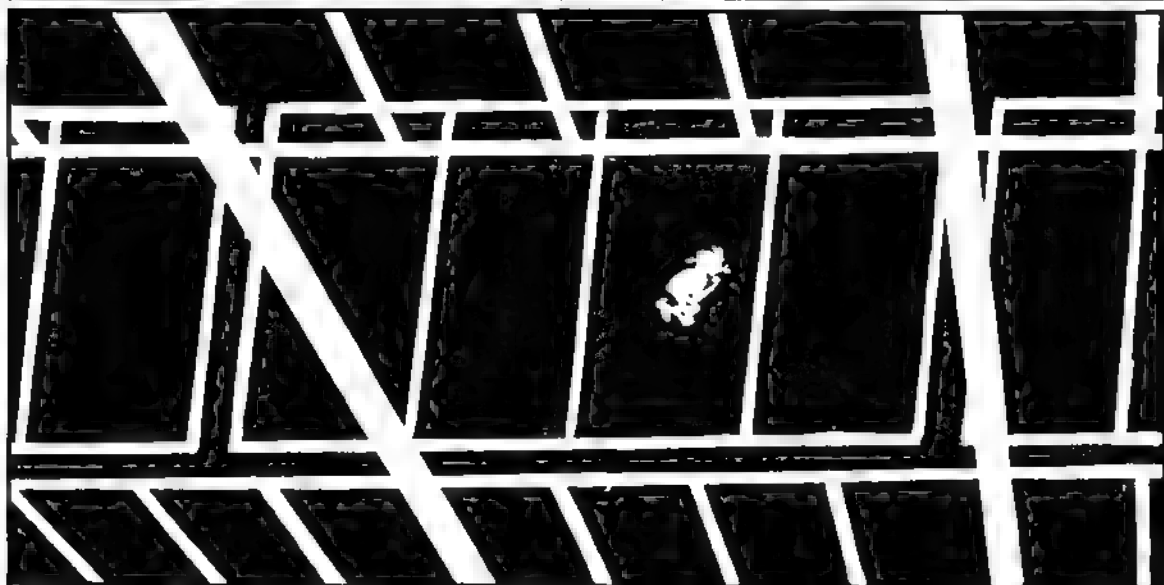
WAIT ENJOY THE
COMPANY

WAIT -AND
WONDER?

ESTHER.

WHERE
ARE
YOU?











WHAT THE
HELL...



THAT'S
YOUR NEW
HAIRSTYLE.
IT'S QUITE
FLATTER NG

SO MUCH
ABOUT YOU
IS GOING TO
CHANGE



YOU'RE A VERY LUCKY
YOUNG WOMAN FEW WHO
LIVE GET A **SECOND**
CHANCE. A SECOND
LIFE.

A LIFE
FREE FROM
PAINFUL
CHOICES. A
LIFE IN WHICH
YOU WILL
NEVER BE
ALONE.

YOU WILL
BE **REMADE.**
IMPROVED.

BODY
AND SOUL



BY THE
TIME WE'RE
FINISHED WITH
YOU, YOU'LL HAVE
A NEW **NAME**--A
NEW **HISTORY**--
AND NO **MEMORY**
OF ANY **MOMENT**
MY PEOPLE
WILL NOT HAVE
CREATED
FOR YOU

YOUR
FIGURE REQUIRES
NO ENHANCEMENT
NATURE CRAFTED IT
TO **PERFECTION**.
BUT WE **WILL** HAVE
TO TOUCH UP YOUR
FACE A BIT

MAKE IT
A TAD LESS
ETHNIC.



A TAD
MORE **MARKET-
ABLE.**

MORNING.
THEY LET
ME OUT



I STOP BY MY
LOFT TO CLEAN
MYSELF UP AND
GET INTO SOME
FRESH CLOTHES

IT'S PUSHING
NOON BY THE
TIME I REACH
THE SALOON
LOOKING FOR
WITNESSES.

WHAT, I'M SUPPOSED TO
REMEMBER EVERY
BROAD WHO COMES IN-
TO THIS JOINT?



YOU DRINKING
OR NOT? THIS
PLACE FILLS UP
PRETTY QUICK. I
ONLY GOT ROOM
FOR PAYING
CUSTOMERS

SORRY, HANDSOME I
DON'T REMEMBER MUCH
ABOUT LAST NIGHT I
MUST'VE BEEN **THREE
SHEETS** BY THE TIME
YOU SHOWED UP



BUT BUY ME A
LITTLE **HAIR OF THE
DOG** AND I'LL TELL
THE COPS ANYTHING
YOU WANT.

IT'S LIKE IT
NEVER HAP-
PENED.



I BEGIN TO
WONDER
IF I DID.

HEY!
LONGHAIR!



HEH DON'T YOU **HATE**
'EM WHEN THEY **CALL** US
THAT?



I'M DOWN ON
MY LUCK, BUD
THINK YOU COULD
SPARE A COUPLE
BUCKS?

SURE



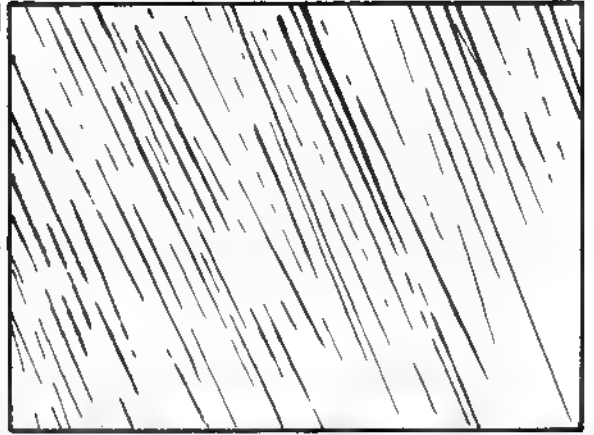
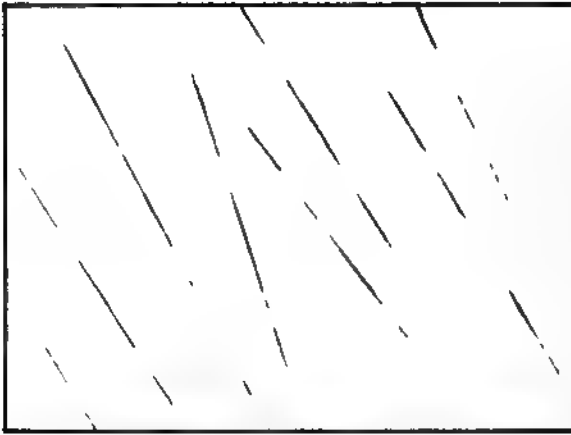
TELL YOU WHAT
I'LL GIVE YOU
TWENTY FOR
THAT **SHOE**.



**SOLID,
MAN!**

WHAT-
EVER **FLOATS**
YOUR **BOAT!**







COLONEL. WE
MAY HAVE A
PROBLEM.

CONTINUED



By far and away, most of the mail we've received for this column has been favorable, but, heck, why not give it over to the angry folks once in a while? We'll start up by finishing off the mail on my and Lynn Varley's *300*:

Amir Hussain
Amir.Hussain@email.csun.edu

For the record, let me state that I am a big fan of Frank Miller's work. I grew up reading *Daredevil* and really liked his turn at it. And, as with most people, it was *The Dark Knight Returns* that made me stand up and take notice. Since then, I haven't had time to keep up with everything he's done. When I saw *300* #1, I thought that it would be a good way of reacquainting myself with his work. I read issue #4 yesterday, and that prompted this response.

I do like the story and artwork. They are up to Frank's usual standard of excellence. But as I read *300* #4, I felt a certain unease. Perhaps this is simply that, being of Pakistani origin, I always sympathized with the Persians over the Greeks when I first heard the story at school (in Canada, where I moved when I was four). Or perhaps it is because, as an academic whose work focuses on contemporary Islamic societies in North America, I am sensitive to the portrayals of "the Orient." And I know that *300* is a work of fiction, but I am still bothered by some things.

In issue #2, Xerxes' spy is portrayed as a Negro. In issue #3, reference is made "to snuff out the world's one hope for reason and justice." Finally, in issue #4, there is a reference to the Persian attempt "to make slaves of the only free men the world has ever known," and Xerxes is portrayed as a Negro. It is these things which bother me: the old lie that Greece was the only center in the world of freedom and reason and justice; and that the enemies of "white" Greece were black.

In 1984, Salman Rushdie published a magnificent essay in *Granta* entitled "Outside the Whale." Part of the subject in that essay was the portrayal of India by the British in the so-called time of the "Raj Revival":

"I should also mind less, were it not for the fact that *The Far Pavilions*, book as well as TV serial, is only the latest in a very long line of fake portraits inflicted by the West on the East. The creation of a false Orient of cruel-lipped princes and dusky slim-hipped maidens, of ungodliness, fire and the sword, has been brilliantly described by Edward Said in his classic

study *Orientalism*, in which he makes clear that the purpose of such false portraits was to provide moral, cultural, and artistic justification for imperialism and for its underpinning ideology, that of the racial superiority of the Caucasian over the Asiatic. Let me add only that stereotypes are easier to shrug off if yours is not the culture being stereotyped; or, at the very least, if your culture has the power to counterpunch against the stereotype."

Sadly, Rushdie's words are applicable to *300*, or at least to my reading of it.

And here I was just trying to make Xerxes impressive and sexy, to evoke both the might and sensuality of Ancient Persia. Sorry it didn't work for you . . . and, anyway, since when is resembling a "Negro" a bad thing, huh?

Now, back to *Sin City*. First, the one-shot *Just Another Saturday Night*:

Jackie Williams
grimace@unidial.com

I would like to start this letter off by saying that I am a huge fan of Frank Miller's work and that I believe his work on *300* was exceptional. It, along with his run on *Daredevil* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, is an example of some of the best work ever produced in the comics medium. I have always felt Frank to be a pioneer and a true artist, while some of his peers seem to work only to get a check. I never thought I would have something to complain to Frank about, but that was before *Sin City: Just Another Saturday Night*.

There is really only one issue I would like to discuss, but unfortunately it is a major component of the story. Allow me to get to my point: *What the heck were you thinking when you wrote about Marv's confrontation with the frat boys in the projects?* I've been to the projects, I briefly lived in the projects, and I know that where Marv ended up was nothing like the projects. There is no set of projects in America where you find the local *gangstas* running around shooting folks with arrows. If those frat boys had started some trouble in most projects, they would have found themselves at the business end of a 9mm or .38. Instead of the projects, it seemed like they had wandered onto the set of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. Things only got more ludicrous once Marv started using hand signals to remind people of who he was. Was he fighting in the projects, or was he an umpire at a baseball game? For an artist who is known for doing a significant amount of research, Frank seemed to know nothing about the projects. I realize *Sin City* is a fictionalized universe with its own set of rules, but I found this depiction to be a bit much. Here's to hoping that the next *Sin City* is, for me at least, a little more believable.

You seem like a patient sort, so please check out the explanation for the Projects in *Sin City: Family Values*. They aren't a housing project at all. More like a dark fantasy based on the real thing. Yeah, like it needs darkening . . .

Glad you enjoyed *300*. I sure loved making it.

Jamie Creer
jcreer@families.qld.gov.au

Who would have thought I'd have missed such a psychotic individual as Marv? Glad he's back. Pity he's dead. Nice to see Hartigan again as well. Nice touch.

The narrative structure was what clinched this issue for me. Pure crime *noir*. Start in the middle, work your way back to the start, and end it all in a bloody mess. The politics of *Sin City* are interesting and extremely confronting.

I've read some of the letters, and there always seems to be someone asking you if "you feel any responsibility if someone reads your comic and then goes out and shoots someone." What a crock! Sorry, but that argument doesn't sell me. Sure, there is the possibility (a remote one) that some nut could get the idea of going out and killing someone after reading one of your comics. This person could also get the idea from a myriad of pink elephants telling him or her to do it as well. What are you going to do? Censor pink elephants? Kinda reminds me of the hundreds of child molesters who have pleaded that they did it only because they were molested as a child. Bullshit! Take responsibility for your own actions, and stop blaming the unseen "them." My own father was a prick, and that has made me go out of my way to be a better father to my four-year-old. I took responsibility for my own actions.

Hang on a second while I get off my soapbox. As I said, *Just Another Saturday Night* was excellent. Just make sure you don't wait so long before you write another Marv story. Trust me, you don't want to get me and the pink elephants mad at you.

And don't let the bastards drag you down.

Thanks!

Okay, I slipped one happy letter in. Back to the program.

Alex Le
alee@cci-internet.com

Your past work has been fun to read and quality stuff. But you've lost one of your most important traits. Your most important work has always had the quality that things were being done in a certain way that the comics world hadn't seen before. You excited us when you "forgot" about how everyone does something and did it your own way. But with all your *Sin City* books, that you draw and write the same way, you've lost that appeal. Also, your latest—unlike your greatest, which was the original *Sin City*—doesn't have the comic-book appeal that the original did. The original *Sin City* would be a very difficult film to make, because film can't do Marv's comic-book-style figure as easily as comics can. The best scenes of your work, including your superhero styles, show what comics can do better than any other media. You seemed to really revel in the medium at that time, while your current work and characters can all be done in film and don't really exploit the comics medium as your past work did. Why this abandonment of superheroes and superheroes' appeal that made us love comics in the first place? No other art form can do superheroes as well as comics, so why drop them? Cars and a normal-looking Dwight

don't really work on what comics are really good at.

Also, I believe that comics have lost their likability and appeal. Look at Bill Watterson, who has produced one of the finest bodies of work in the past decade. Everything he utilizes, every panel says, "Look at how well comics can do this; comics are the best."

You say you don't try to make comics a poor man's film, but are you practicing what you preach? You can do a lot better than that, Frank. Are you afraid of insulting snobbish intellectual deadbeats with superhero mannerisms and poses and pure comic delight by keeping down the thing that makes comics so great and lovable? Comics deserve new ways of doing things and new visions. The style should fit those new visions, and talented, but forgettable, artists cheat themselves out of a great time by rushing and doing things the normal way, while true pioneers like yourself are interested in doing it their own new way. But if you're totally happy and saying, "Oh, I love every panel," wow, then forget all I've said. Comics are meant to be fun and exciting, and why shy away from superheroes, who make the best use of comics? If you doubt me, read the best comics. *From Hell* may please novelists, but it lacks the love and the exploitation of the comic-book form that Kirby's, Stan Lee's, and Watterson's comics have. You can do better than that, Frank.

So I ought to be blazing new trails by . . . going back to superheroes?

My brain hurts.

On now to *Booze, Broads, & Bullets*:

Robert Gerinson
Hertfordshire, England

Wow! Eleven yarns in one book! *Booze, Broads, & Bullets* was my best Chanukah present. Thanks for such a great year-ender.

My wish for 1999? A yarn with Delia.

Thanks again.

You've got no idea how close your wish is to coming true, pal.

Cashé Parfit
Perth, Australia

What the *hell* happened to Legend?

Sin City whips ass, baby!

Why did Legend go face down? Too many egos (mine included), and not enough books. Consider Legend an unintentional test run for Maverick. I guess the idea needed a well-placed kraut to pull it together, eh, Fraulein Schutz? [Jawohl, boss! — Diana]

Alex Baumans
alex.baumans@euronet.be

Mr. Frank Miller, you are the Leni Riefenstahl of comics, and I do mean that as a compliment.

Yikes!

I'm going home now.

—FM



FM

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